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MR TUCKERMAN'S

SEVENTH SEMIANNUAL REPORT

OF HIS SERVICE AS A

MINISTER AT LARGE IN BOSTON.

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‘The most effectual way to check the growth of great offences, is, to check the growth of little ones.’—*London Quarterly Review*, January, 1831.

‘The experiment made of the Institution for the reformation of Juvenile Offenders, under the admirable system of discipline and education adopted by the highly gifted and benevolent Principal of the House, is most encouraging ; and leaves nothing to regret, but the want of means to extend its usefulness. To provide these, and thus to rescue from crime and ruin the unfortunate objects who might there find an asylum, would be an occupation at all times worthy of the persevering attention of the city government’.—*Address of the Mayor to the City Council of Boston, on the 3d of January, 1831.*

‘The best penitentiary institution which was ever devised by the art, and established by the beneficence of man, is, in all probability, the House for the reformation of Juvenile Delinquents.’—*Governor Clinton’s Message to the New York Legislature.*

‘It is a rare occurrence indeed to find persons of cultivated minds in an Alms-House.’—*Report of the Commissioners of the New York Alms-House, September, 1830.*

REPORT.

To the Executive Committee of the
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

GENTLEMEN,—There is no single topic belonging to the great subjects of poverty and crime, which is in itself so important, and has so strong a claim upon public interest, as the condition of the morally neglected and vicious children, a large part of whom, if they shall be left to the influences under which they are now living, will inevitably become early proficient in depravity, lost to all that is truly good and happy, and the bane of society; and, if they shall not be brought to our prisons, and even fall the victims of violated law, will almost certainly live in a state of abject want, and die in the debasement of unrepented sin. I referred to this topic in the close of my last Report, and I beg leave here to resume it. Would that I could speak of it in a manner in any degree commensurate with the greatness of its claims, whether we regard the individuals immediately concerned in it, or those without whose instrumentality they cannot be rescued from the ruin which threatens them; or, whether we look to the immediate, or the final conse-

quences, of the ignorance, transgression, and exposures in which we find them.

I could neither satisfy myself, nor others, by any general language upon this topic. The principal cause, I am persuaded, of the little interest which is felt in it, is, the vagueness of general conception concerning it; and this is to be obviated only by a statement of facts, by which the character and extent of the evil to be remedied may be distinctly seen. I rejoice indeed to know, that there is in our community a very widely extended, and an active sympathy, as well with the moral, as with the physical condition of the poor. But this sympathy is not yet, by any means, what it should be. It is too general, where it should be particular; and therefore too indefinite, to awaken the strong sense which should be felt of personal obligation in the cause. It has indeed provided two ministers for the religious instruction of seamen, and five others exclusively for the service of the poor. Nor is this all. To myself at least, — and I know not how far to others, — it has most liberally extended the means of adding to moral and religious instruction, the relief, to large numbers, of pressing want, and of severe suffering. Yet this ministry will very partially accomplish the objects which ought to be comprehended in it, if it shall fail to call forth in its supporters a stronger feeling of their moral relation to the poor; if it shall fail of bringing them into a closer connexion with the less prospered classes of their fellow-beings; and if it shall be viewed, and maintained, as a substitute for the personal services, which might otherwise, perhaps, be thought obligatory. I should indeed look with no pleasure upon this ministry, if I must feel

that its tendency will be to lessen the sense of obligation in its patrons, according to their means and opportunities to do what they can, not only for the temporary relief, but for the permanent improvement and the salvation of those, to whom they may extend their personal interest, and care, and kindness. I have endeavored, therefore, in my Reports, to call forth in those for whom they are intended, a feeling of personal responsibility in the work of improving the condition, by improving the character of society among us. On the topic upon which I would now address you, this feeling is of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated. If the evils of which I am to speak be in any due degree apprehended, they will, and they must, excite this feeling in the breast of every Christian, of every philanthropist among us.

I have said, that the prevailing conceptions respecting these children are vague. That I may do what I can to awaken the interest that should be felt in them, I will attempt to classify them. There is a great difference of condition, and of character among them, and very different measures are to be taken for their rescue, and happiness. In regard to these measures, in certain cases, there may be a diversity of opinion; and if any may be proposed, that are wiser than those I shall suggest, I shall heartily rejoice in the preference which may be given to them. But I think there will be no difference of opinion upon the question, should these children, or should they not, be disregarded by us? As citizens, as philanthropists, as Christians, can we justify our neglect of them?

Of the children of whom I have spoken, let me first call your attention to those who are between seven and fourteen years of age. And of these, I would first speak of *the boys*, whom I would divide into three classes.

The *first* class consists of those who cannot read, and who therefore cannot obtain admission into our grammar schools.

It may be asked by some,— have we, in truth, children in our city, who are at an age to be in our grammar schools, but who cannot read well enough to enter them? I answer, — we have. Four years ago there was a school in Scott's court, supported by private contributions, expressly for children of this description. This school was so maintained for eighteen months; and there were in it, during that time, seventy children, about three fourths of whom were boys. In that school, thirty children were fitted to enter a grammar school; of whom, twentyfour were placed in one or another of our grammar schools, and employment was found for the remaining six, either in the city or the country. And had there been three similar schools in other parts of the city, I have no doubt they might have been supplied with an equal number of children, as unqualified as these were for our free schools. Some of these were the children of parents who had neglected to send them to our preparatory, or primary schools. But a still greater number were the children of foreigners, or of parents who had removed from the country to the city; and they were brought here unable to read, at an age at which they could not be sent to our primary schools. Now it is very absurd to say, that this is an

unavoidable evil; that we have no accountableness for the ignorance of these children; and that they must therefore be left to take the consequences of the poverty and crime into which they may fall. The truth is, that, to a great extent at least, the evil may be remedied. Besides, let it be considered, that these children are to continue with us, and are by and by to form a part of our efficient population, for weal or for wo. And it is not only probable, but almost certain, that if they shall be left to grow up in their ignorance, they will not only be poor, but a large, and probably the largest, part of them will be grossly vicious. Nor can it be, that we should not be partakers of the consequences of their poverty and vice. They must, should they fall into want, or crime, be supported from our property, either through charity, or taxation, or theft. There is then a strong immediate interest concerned in the question, should we, or should we not, make some provision for these children?

Of this class, however, I would make two divisions. The first division consists of those who are profane, and vulgar in conversation; impertinent in manners; regardless of parental authority; fond of ardent spirits; accustomed to falsehood; and, as far as they can be at their age, to petty gambling, and to pilfering. — The second division consists of those, who, either from having been under less unfavorable influences at home, or from less natural strength of propensity and passion, have not fallen into the vices of the first division. These, if brought under the instruction which will qualify them for our grammar schools, by this care alone might be recovered, and probably be trained to be worthy citizens,

and good men. But other measures are required for the salvation of those of the first division. These measures, however, are within the scope of our power; and ours will be the fault if we fail to enforce them.

The *second* class consists of those, who, although they can read, and might therefore be in our grammar schools, either have not yet been placed in them, or from various causes have been taken from them by their parents.

Of those who can read, but are not known to our instructors, and are idlers and vagrants when they should be at school, some by reason of the poverty, but a greater number through the inefficiency, or the vicious habits of their parents, were either allowed to run at large at the time when they should have been transferred from the primary to the grammar schools; or they were kept from school for the sake of the occasional services they could render, in obtaining food and fuel for their families. Some of these are also the children of foreigners, and of parents from the country, who have neglected to avail themselves of the privileges of our free schools. And of those who have been in these schools and have been taken from them, some are the children of parents who could not, or who, at the expense of the least self-denial, would not, obtain the books that were required for them. Some, as I have been told by parents, were allowed to leave school, because it was intended to send them into the country; — an intention which has been delayed, till it has been forgotten. And some have been removed from school, to be placed in shops and offices, from which they have been dismissed

for unfaithfulness, or because their services were no longer wanted. — Of this class I would likewise form two divisions, corresponding with those of the first. In one division I would place those, who, in disposition and practice, are vicious; who are corrupting one another, and will corrupt all who shall have intercourse with them. However qualified, as far as knowledge is concerned, for our grammar schools, these ought not to be admitted into them. Other provision should be made for them. In the other division I would place those, who, with better moral dispositions, and a higher order of general character, require only the intervention of one interested in their well-being to place them in our free schools. Admitted and fixed there, and still kept under the kindly eye of the friend who interposed to save them, they would probably be made useful, respectable and happy.

The *third* class consists of truants from our schools. Of these also I would form two divisions.

The first division consists of those, who have lost their places in our grammar schools, and are stricken from the lists of the teachers. Even among these, however, an important distinction is to be recognised. By far the largest part of this division consists of those, who ought not to be sent again to our free schools. They are associates, and are partakers of the vices, of the worst division of the two first classes; and are not behind them in any wickedness. But there are those among them, who, from mere weakness of character, and the absence of all judicious restraints at home, have been led away by the persuasions, or the artifices, of others. These, if taken into the moral charge of a

friend, or of friends, who will watch over and encourage them, may be restored to the schools from which they have been excluded. I would not, therefore, have them confounded with those, for whose salvation, if it is to be obtained, other and more authoritative measures must be taken. — In the second division I would place those, who are but occasionally, and even those who are frequently but not habitually, truants; and who, if unchecked and unguarded, will soon fall into the first division of this class. Of this division I would observe, that all should be considered as recoverable, merely by a restoration of them to our free schools. No boy becomes at once an obdurate truant, or in any respect obdurately vicious. But he who has begun to be a truant, if he shall be left uncared for, will probably sink into the corruption of those with whom he seeks his pleasures, and become a vagrant. The restoration of a boy of this description to our free schools, I consider, therefore, as the most important service which can possibly be rendered to him. Nor is it an unimportant service to the whole community of which he is a member.

I must say a few words also of the *female children*, who should be, but are not in our schools. These I would likewise divide into three classes.

In the *first class* I would place those, who cannot read well enough to be received into our grammar schools. And where this is the only cause which keeps them from school, it would seem that it could not be very difficult to obtain a remedy of the evil. There could hardly be a wiser economy than that of maintaining three or four charity schools in the city, for boys and

girls of this description. There is now in Salem street, one school of this sort for girls, which has been kept three and a half years. Its number is limited to fifty; and the average number in it is forty. But it is often full. I have no doubt this school has been for the moral salvation of many.

The *second class* consists of those, who, having been kept from school by the inability, or the failure from other causes, of their parents to purchase the books required for them, are growing up in ignorance, and exposed to every moral danger. Where the evil arises from parental neglect, the parent is to be excited to his or her duty to the child. And much may be done in giving this excitement to parents who need it. And where there is an actual inability to obtain the books required, there is benevolence enough in our community, if it can be felt that the kindness will not be abused, to meet the necessities of every parent and child in the city who shall so need it.

The *third class* are the children of parents, who have little or no care for the intellectual, or the moral culture of their offspring. Girls of this description are frequently to be seen in our streets, in the filthy and tattered garments, which indicate the character of the poverty in which they live at home. Some of them, however, by their attire, would intimate better things of those who have the charge of them. These girls are sometimes the playfellows of the vicious boys of their age, and are scarcely less viciously inclined. The best condition to be hoped for concerning them, if left to go on in the course in which they now are, is one of abject poverty. But it is at least equally probable, that they

will become as corrupt, as they are ignorant and destitute.

I repeat, that the children of whom I have here spoken are under fourteen years of age. Is it asked, how many, probably, are there of these children? I answer, certainly not less, I think, than between three and four hundred.

But there is another, and a very large class, which forces itself upon our notice, and which has not less claims upon the interest and sympathy of our community. I refer to the boys, between fourteen, and sixteen or seventeen years of age, *who are without any regular employment*; and a large part of whom, if neglected, will at best become paupers, and probably sink into the debasement even of the grossest sins.

This class consists principally, but not wholly, of those who have arrived at this period of life without having received the elementary instruction, which would have qualified them to have served as apprentices in the different mechanic employments; and of those who, as truants, and as otherwise vicious, have learned to prefer a life of vagrancy. Of these I would form one division. But this class comprehends also a considerable number, who have been employed as errand boys, but from various causes have lost their places, and are thus daily brought into connexion with the above named classes of idlers; and of some also, who, having completed their term at school, are *wanting places*, and in the meantime are wandering through our streets, to find companions or pleasure, where they may. Of these, I would form another division. Even of the first, and worst division, however, it may reasonably

be assumed, that nearly all may be recovered to a life of usefulness. And of the last division, it ought to be held, that *all may be saved*.

The character and condition of the bad boys of this class is the most pitiable, the most deplorable, which can well be imagined. And they have strong claims upon us, because, in truth, their own is not the heaviest part of the responsibility for their characters, and for their offences. There is a greater weight of accountability for their condition upon others. Many, and perhaps most of them, have been reared amidst the worst examples; and never knew the kindly influence of an affectionate and a religious interest in their welfare and happiness. And never can they know it, but through the sympathy of those, who will seek them out, that they may save them. Let any one, then, who is accustomed to pass them unnoticed, but who would know, as far as he may by seeing them, who, and what they are, look about him as he passes through Sea Street, or Broad Street. Let him go upon our large wharves, especially in the northern parts of the city, or to Faneuil Hall Market, and look at those who are daily to be seen there. Let him ask the Superintendent of our market, or our wharfingers, respecting these boys, and their means of subsistence? It is not a question, whether, living as they now live, they are every day becoming more and more depraved, and more and more fitted for aggravated crime; nor, whether they are daily extending the corrupting influence of their example to others much younger than themselves, as well as to many of their own age. But it is a question, which should engage the serious consideration of all among us,

whether measures cannot be devised, which will be effectual for their salvation?*

Let us then fairly meet the question, how are these evils, as far as they exist, to be remedied; and, how may we most effectually prevent a recurrence of them?

I reply, that, for the purpose both of cure and of prevention, the first thing requisite is a right apprehension, by the intelligent and moral among us, of the extent and character of these evils, and of personal obligation to supply a remedy.

In my last Report, I spoke of an enlightened public sentiment respecting the extent and true character of any evils existing in a community, as the first in order, and the most important, of the means of arresting, of remedying, and of preventing a recurrence of these evils. And grateful indeed should I be, if I could do anything to call forth this sentiment, in regard to the classes of children I have brought before you; for, far the greatest number of them would then be saved from the ruin with which they are now threatened. And is it not wonderful, that, in this community, so full of benevolent enterprise, and where such generous provision

* Some of the boys around Faneuil Hall Market are employed as porters, or carriers of the articles bought for families at the market. It is greatly to be regretted that these boys should find employment there; not only from the fact, that the small sums which they thus obtain are expended for vicious indulgences, but because their example induces others of their age to seek a share of this employment, for the sake of sharing in these vicious pleasures. There should be *licensed porters for our markets*, and no others should be allowed to act there in that capacity. There are many poor men in the city, whose infirmities disqualify them for hard labor; but who, as Market Porters, might obtain a comfortable support for their families.

is made for the instruction of the young; where it is so well understood that an idle, uneducated, and vicious youth is the sure presage of, and preparation for, a profligate, debased, and wretched manhood, and where there is so much solicitude among parents for the virtue, the security, and well-being of their children; is it not wonderful, that there should be among us so great a supineness, in respect to the large number of those children, of whom, if left neglected, it is quite as certain that eight out of ten will become tenants of our prisons, or at least will be vagrants, or more or less dependent on charity through their life, as it is certain that they will live for a few years? I believe, indeed, that the true character and extent of this evil are not generally understood. It is not improbable, that some may even be slow to admit, that there are, in this City of Schools, more than three hundred of an age to be in these schools, and who ought to be in them, who are yet deriving no benefit from them; and that there are probably at the least two hundred more, between the ages of fourteen and sixteen or seventeen, who are without employment, are often a heavy burden upon their parents, and are already greatly vicious for their time of life; or, as the companions of the vicious, are in the way to profligacy and crime, or at best to beggary and wretchedness. I earnestly pray that a spirit of inquiry may be awakened on this subject. I beseech the intelligent and virtuous among us; I beseech the parents, who are endeavoring to train their children to virtue, and who are aware of the danger to their children of the contaminating influence of vicious examples; and I earnestly entreat all who are interested in the cause of public order, security and happiness, to look to

the condition of the children of whom I have spoken; and then to ask, and deliberately to consider, what is their own, and the true interest of all, in regard to these children? I have said, that these children may be saved. Is it asked, how? Allow me to enter into some details in answering this question.

I have already remarked, that there is a great diversity in the moral condition of these children. Some of them, also, have anxious parents, who want nothing on earth so much, as a friend to aid them in the care and discipline of their children. Many are the children of widows, who can neither keep them at home, nor follow them abroad. And many are the children of intemperate, and of heedless and reckless parents. Different provisions are therefore to be made for them, and different dispositions to be made of them. Of those, for example, between seven and fourteen years of age, who cannot read, and cannot therefore be received in our grammar schools, far the greatest number might be rescued from the degradation to which they are exposed, by the establishment of three or four private schools, in which they might be qualified for admission into our free schools. Of the truants from our schools, many, who have not yet become strongly attached to vicious associates, might be restored to their places in these schools, and might be kept there. Many, too, of the lads from twelve to fourteen, as well as of those from fourteen to sixteen years of age, might be apprenticed to farmers, and to mechanics, *in the country*. And great is the good that is obtained, when this disposition is made of a boy who has been, or who otherwise would have been, a vagrant in our streets. And, for those who are decidedly vicious, at an age under sixteen

years, — and not for these only, but for those also, who, as truants, and as the companions of the idle and vicious, are so averse from the discipline of a school, that they are not by any persuasions to be kept there; — for these, the wisest, the best, the most effectual of all provisions, is, *the School of Reformation at South Boston*. Is it said, all this may be very well, and might indeed be conducive to great good, if it could be accomplished? And why, I ask, may it not all be accomplished? The expense to be incurred in effecting all these objects will not amount to a tenth, or even to a twentieth part of that which must be incurred for the public provision, which must ultimately be made for these very children, if they shall be suffered, as they have been, to go on increasing in numbers, and in sin. Still these objects are not to be attained without some expense. Let us then deliberately count the cost, and fairly compare it with the gain which it will bring to us.

Here, then, are some hundreds of children, who are in various ways to be provided for. And, I ask, is not the supervision of these children a charge sufficiently extensive, and requiring sufficient care and labor, for any one individual, whatever may be the capacity and suitableness for the service, which he may bring to it? Let me say, then, there should be a *Municipal Officer*, call him by what name you will, whose special duty it should be, to look to the idle, vagrant, and vicious children of the city. This, I say, should be his specific duty; for within this limitation he could have the authority of law to support him. And if this officer should do nothing more, than, availing himself of the power which existing laws will already give him to prosecute, and thus to bring to the judgment of a court, the child-

ren who ought to be sent to the School of Reformation, he would perform at once for these children, for their parents, and for the public, an invaluable service: a service which, alone, would be a rich compensation for the expense at which it must be maintained. But, though this might be the only authority with which he could be legally invested, in regard to the classes of children of whom I have spoken, the work of thus disposing of these children would constitute but a single branch of the service he might render. Let him be a man of intelligence and energy, of sound judgment and of active kindness, — a man who understands and feels what is to be lost by the moral ruin, and what is to be gained by the moral recovery, of a child. Let him take cognisance, as he should, of every child who shall be found out of school when he should be in school, and of every lad over fourteen years of age who is wandering through our streets without employment, and acquaint himself with the parents and friends of these children; and let him offer his assistance to children and to parents to obtain employment, especially in the country, for those who may be sent to farmers and mechanics there, and to restore to our schools the children who have left but who should be in them; and he will thus do as much for the prevention, as, by the authority with which he might be invested by law, he could do for the remedy of evil. I have had some, though a limited experience in each of these departments of service; and I know that very great good may be done in it. Let it be known, that there is a public officer, whose business is the charge of lawless and profligate children, and the immediate effect will be a great and powerful restraint upon those, whose dispositions and tendencies are to

evil, but whose interests and pleasures are not yet so amalgamated with those of their vicious associates, that they cannot be separated from them. Many will thus be induced to retrace their steps, and to return to duty; and many will be kept from entering the paths, the end of which they will perceive is disgrace and punishment.

I may here observe also, that the Directors of the House of Industry, and of the School of Reformation, are not allowed to apprentice, or otherwise to dispose of any of the children in these institutions, except within the limits of the commonwealth. Nor can they even meet all the applications which are made to them for children, by farmers and mechanics in the country, within these limits. Applications, however, are made also from the neighboring states for children of the poor in the city; and a standing advertisement in 'the New England Farmer,' and an occasional one in some of our city newspapers, that boys or children for the country can be supplied by the officer I have referred to, would give him facilities for a greatly advantageous disposition of a considerable number, for whom so good a provision could in no other manner be made.— I know not, indeed, how the city government could make a wiser annual appropriation of a few hundred dollars, than for the support of this office. It ought to be filled by one, who will be respected, and trusted in it; who will deserve and obtain the confidence of the parents, whose children may fall under his charge; and by one, who shall be capable of making full and satisfactory reports, both of what he shall learn upon the subjects connected with his office, and of his doings in it. It should not, therefore, be the great question in view of this office, how can it be filled most cheaply? In

my judgment, allow me to say, the question of well or ill paved streets, or of disordered or well conditioned sewers, or even of wise or unwise ordinances and establishments for the preservation of the health of the city, is of minor interest, — of secondary importance.*

Our School of Reformation is daily becoming more extensively known, and daily rising in reputation among us. Nor have I any apprehension, while it shall be in the charge of its present Superintendent, that it will disappoint any fair expectations that may be formed of its beneficial tendencies. I know, indeed, of no other individual, who could have done what Mr Wells has done in that School; and, in the very important work of making it what it should be, he is scarcely less impor-

* The School of Reformation at South Boston was opened in September, 1826. — The Rev. Mr Wells took the charge of it in November, 1828. — The number who have been sent to the school is 294. — There have been received into it, since it has been in the care of Mr Wells, 202. — There are now in the school 93 children; 84 boys, and 9 girls. — Of these 84 boys, 66 are children of Americans, and 16 of foreigners; of 2, the parentage is not known with certainty. — Of the American children, 19 were brought from the country to the city, and 45 were born in Boston. — Of these boys, 5 were taught in our primary schools, but were not transferred to a grammar school; 25 could not read when they were sent to the School of Reformation; and 53 have been truants from our schools. — I do not think it proper to state the offences for which these boys were sent to the School of Reformation. My object is, to throw some light, if I may, upon the causes which have led to those offences; and, upon the means of their remedy, and prevention. I have, however, the highest satisfaction in being able to say, that, of 136 boys whom Mr Wells has apprenticed, 116 may fairly be viewed as *good boys*. They are doing well. Doubts are felt concerning 15; and 5 are considered as bad. If these facts will not call forth both private and public favor for this School, I know not how that favor is to be obtained for it.

tant to the institution, than the institution is to the city. But there are yet many among our intelligent citizens, who have no adequate conceptions of the character and objects of this School. It is even confounded, by not a few, with the House of Correction, to which, however, it is scarcely more like, than the House of Correction is to what it should be; and a greater dissimilarity than this can hardly be imagined. Very grateful, therefore, shall I be, if I may do anything to correct any erroneous impressions respecting it; and to awaken in any minds a stronger interest in its prosperity and success. Even as it now is, this School is exerting a redeeming power, which should awaken in our community a universal interest in the cause of maintaining and extending its usefulness. But it is susceptible of great improvements. What it has achieved, is but a strong indication of what it may do. There is, in truth, I believe, no single means that can be devised, by which so much can be done to diminish the work of our criminal courts; so much to lessen the number of the inmates of our prisons and alms-houses, and the consequent expense of these institutions; and so much at once for the salvation of those who are exposed to moral ruin, and therefore for general order and security, as by the School of Reformation, if it shall be made, what it is not only practicable, but what it will be the truest economy to make it. I have long seen and felt the defects, as well as the excellencies, of this institution. But, unwilling to give you only my own convictions on the subject, I addressed a note to the Rev. Mr Wells, the Superintendent of the School, requesting him to inform me what are the most important changes he would suggest, with a view to its more successful operation.

I feel, therefore, a strong confidence in offering the following propositions, as containing at once the results of his experience in the school, and of my own observations of it.

First. That there should be a distinct Board of Directors of the School, to be appointed annually by the city government.

Second. That the Executive Head, or Principal of the institution, should be, *ex officio*, a member of the Board of Directors.

Third. That a building should be erected for the institution, which should be suited, as the present building is not, for its various objects.

Fourth. That the city should procure a good farm for the institution. By means of a farm for spring, summer and autumn work, and of work-shops for winter, the boys might almost, or wholly, support themselves.

Fifth. That the Legislature be petitioned for an amendment of the present act for the incorporation of the School, by an act which shall authorize the Directors to receive from any court in this state, and authorizing also all the courts in the state to send to such Directors, any such minors convicted before such courts, as may be deemed and decided to be proper members of the School; the parents or guardians of such children, or in case of their inability the town or parish to which such children may belong, or the state, paying the institution, for the care and education of such children, at the rate of fifty dollars per year. And further authorizing such Directors to examine, and try such minors as may be brought before them, and to send such of them to the School as shall be shown and proved to be proper members of the institution; in such cases the

Board having authority to act as a court, from whose judgment there may lie an appeal to a trial by jury. And in case of commitment by such process, the parents or guardians of the children, who shall be so sent to the school, shall be required, if they shall be able to do it, to pay for the board and instruction of the children who shall be so sent, to an amount, or at a rate, not exceeding fifty dollars per year. And, in case any parent or guardian may wish to send his child or ward to this School, without any judicial process, but still because the child is refractory, and disobedient, that the Directors shall be allowed to receive such child into the school, the parent or guardian agreeing to pay for the board and education of the child, at the rate of seventy-five dollars per year; and, having also the right to take him or her from the school, at any time after the expiration of six months from the time of his or her admission to it. Also, further to authorise the Directors, or in cases of emergency the Principal of the institution, to send to any part of the commonwealth for any members of the School, who may have unlawfully left it, and to return them to the institution.

And, *Sixth*. That if the city shall not be willing to build the proposed house, it is respectfully suggested, that the city should furnish the land for it; and that a company of gentlemen, if such a company can be formed, should build the house. A mortgage of the house and land would be good security of their property to such a company; and it is believed, that a good interest on their investment might be obtained from the avails of those children, who will be sent agreeably to the provisions in the foregoing proposition; the city agreeing to use the building for the purposes for which it shall be

erected, and reserving the right, at will and on terms to be agreed upon, of purchasing it of the stockholders.

Little, I trust, need be said, of the importance of a new and very different building from that now used, for the purposes of this institution; of a building at once suited for security of the inmates against elopement, and yet having as little as may be of the structure and the appearance of a prison. The fact is, that for far the greatest number of boys in this School, after a short residence in it, no peculiar provisions for confinement would be required. But such provisions would be requisite *for some*, and must therefore be made. Still they should not be extended beyond the necessity of the case. It is important, also, for the purposes of the institution, that there should be a building, which will admit of classifications and divisions of the children sent to it; and, which will be favorable to the various work, in which it may be thought proper to employ them. By the admirable discipline and order which he has established in his School, Mr Wells has done all, which I believe any man could do, to obviate the disadvantages which are inseparable from the building, in which the School is now established. — But I leave this topic, convinced that, should the interest which it deserves be excited in regard to the institution, the first improvement which will be called for will be a house, which shall be suited for the purposes of a *School of Reformation*. There are, however, two other topics suggested in these propositions, of which I beg leave to say a few words.

First. What is the great end, and aim, of this institution; and, how should it be viewed, and represented by us?

I answer, in the words of Mr Sargeant, President of a similar institution in Philadelphia, 'it is, in the strictest sense of the terms, a work of charity and mercy. Whatever else may be contemplated, — and certainly extensive public advantages are to be expected from it, — is only incidental. This School presents no vindictive, or reproachful aspects. It threatens no humiliating recollections of the past. It holds out no degrading denunciations for the future.' It is, indeed, a School for those who have greatly violated duty, and are to be *reformed*. But though its inmates are sent to it by public authority, and can be discharged from it only by the authority of those who sent them there; and though in leaving the institution they are to pass into the charge of others, who will be accountable for them till they shall be of lawful age to those, from whose immediate watchfulness and care they have received them; still it is to be regarded, *not as a prison*, but *as a school*. Mr Wells considers every boy who enters his school as *reclaimable*. His object is, to give to each one an intellectual, a physical and a moral education, which will prepare him to be a respectable and a respected member of society — a useful and happy man. And most encouraging is the promise of this institution. Let not the children, then, who are sent there, unnecessarily be made to feel, that they have the brand of crime upon their foreheads, and that they are to be recognised as having been criminals. Many of them are not morally worse than are other boys, who will not be sent there; and who, through the faithful guardianship of judicious and kind friends, into whose charge it has been their privilege to fall, will be recovered to virtue, and loved and valued as if they had never fallen from it.

To treat them as if they are reclaimable, and will unquestionably be reclaimed, will be one of the most effectual means of securing their salvation.

Secondly. Who are the proper subjects of this institution; and, how are they to be sent to it, and retained in it?

I would reply, that, except under very extraordinary circumstances, no one should be admitted into this School, while he is under ten years of age. But, with certain restrictions, it should be open to any one under twenty years old. The extreme age to which any one should be sent there, with a view to apprenticeship in the country, should, perhaps, be fifteen years; with the opportunity of remaining a year in preparation for this apprenticeship. But if any shall be sent who are over sixteen years of age, it should be for discipline and instruction, preparatory to a whaling voyage. And unspeakably great would be the gain to the individual and to the community, if, instead of sending any minor either to our Jail or House of Correction, where a confinement of a fortnight or three weeks only will almost certainly complete and insure his moral ruin, our courts were required to sentence every criminal who is brought before them under lawful age, unless he shall be sent to the State Prison, to the School of Reformation; there to remain, only till a voyage can be obtained for him, which will remove him for one or perhaps two years from the scenes and associates of the iniquity, from which he has been taken. I know not, indeed, how public attention is to be aroused to a sense of the magnitude and enormity of the evils of our two county prisons. There is a strange indifference, a most lamentable apathy among us, in regard to

these institutions, the influences of which are almost exclusively of the worst character. They are almost as certainly fatal to every remaining principle of virtue in the young who are sent to them, as would be a pest house to him who is predisposed to small pox or to plague. But I will not here dwell upon them; especially as but a brief space remains which I can occupy in this Report.*

I have spoken of the ages, within which I think members should be admitted into the School. In regard to character, I would say, that it should be a school, not for those only who have fallen into crime; but for those also, of whom there is a moral certainty, that if left to themselves they will soon become criminals. I would not indeed propose any encroachment upon the rights of parents, or upon the proper liberty of children. But applications have been made to me by parents, to obtain a place for their children in this School, because these children were wholly beyond their control and

* I have wished to ascertain the number of lads who have been sent to our House of Correction. But the ages of those committed to this prison are not recorded in the books of the institution. By a reference, however, to the names of those who have been committed since the 2d of December, 1823, — the date at which one of the turnkeys began his service there, — it is recollected by this turnkey, that *eightysix, between the ages of 10 and 17 years*, have been sent to this prison. This number, considerable as it is, is yet, without doubt, short of the number of the lads, who within this term have been sent there. We may, I think, safely suppose this number to be a hundred. I know not how this fact may be viewed by others. But to my mind it is an evil which cries to heaven for a remedy. — Of the eightysix who are distinctly remembered, three have been committed 6 times; one 5 times; three 4 times; five 3 times; and five twice.

were in the way to destruction, while yet they had committed no offence cognisable by the laws. To such parents I would give the privilege of committing their children to the charge of this institution. But in cases of this kind, as well as in many others, I would save parents and friends from the painful necessity of a prosecution of children in the Police Court. Let it be that there are cases, in which a trial in open court is rightfully to be required and insisted upon. All I contend for is, that there are others, in which it is neither necessary nor expedient; and that it is expedient, and will save from much suffering and will conduce to no evil, if a more private trial may be had, with the decisions of which all the parties concerned may be entirely satisfied.

As the law now is, no one can be sent to the School of Reformation, but through the Police, or the Municipal Court. And if, indeed, they must pass through one of our existing courts, I have no objection to the law as it now stands. No one has a higher respect for the Judges of these courts, than I have. They are worthy of entire respect and confidence. But why may not the Legislature give to the Directors of this School a judicial power, for the specific purpose of sending or of committing children to the School; with the right reserved to parents, guardians and friends, of appeal to either of our higher courts? There would be here no more abridgment of personal liberty, than there is in the constitution of our Police Court. And why make it indispensable to arraign children before a court, where they are exposed to the gaze of a crowd, no eye of which should see them? Why oblige parents, and even mothers, to the distressing necessity of appearing,

as they now sometimes must, in this court, amidst the assemblage which is there gathered, as the accusers on oath of their children? I have seldom witnessed a keener anguish of soul, than I have seen in a mother while laboring to bring herself to the resolution required for this duty; and even when she had brought herself to the energy demanded for the discharge of it. And not only will the feelings of parents and friends be respected and saved from the most painful laceration, by this change in the mode of committing children to the School; and not only, when this change shall be understood, will even parents be comparatively happy and grateful, that they may appear before one or more members of this Board to state their grievances respecting their obdurate and ungovernable children; but the children themselves will be made to feel, that, while they are sent to this School by a Board, which has all the authority which law can give to it, they are yet by the very manner of their commitment treated as offending children, — and not as if they belonged to the class, and were sharers of the guilt, of veteran and confirmed transgressors. It is worthy of consideration too, that by this provision the characters and moral necessities of the children received into the School will at once be known, as they now cannot be, to the Superintendent and Directors of it; a very important circumstance in view of the disposition to be made of them, in placing them out as apprentices. I earnestly ask for a serious consideration of this subject. It will, I think, at once approve itself to the minds of many. And I can hardly believe that any one, who may at first view it with some scepticism, will after a little sober thought respecting it withhold from it his hearty approbation.

To conceive adequately and justly of the subject of which I have spoken, it must be understood, that, however various are the circumstances under which individuals are brought to pauperism and crime, and however numerous the examples which may be adduced of those, who under the best means of general education and the best religious and moral influences have sunk into want, debasement and wretchedness; it is still true, that all these are exceptions, which confirm rather than disprove the principle, that the great security of the well-being of each one, and of the virtue, order and happiness of society, is in the widest possible extension of an early culture of the intellectual and moral nature. It lies in provisions for that elementary education, which will qualify each one intelligently to discharge the duties of the station in which he is to be placed; and, in the maintenance of that early watchfulness, encouragement and discipline of the young, on the part both of parents and friends, by which an early regard to God and to Jesus Christ, and an early sense of truth and duty and accountableness, are to be awakened, and kept in exercise, in the soul. Let us then most sedulously watch over the interests of our common and our Sunday schools; and do what we may to maintain and to extend a wise, a kindly and a christian discipline in our own, and in the families of those to whom we may extend the offices of christian friendship.

No fair mind will dispute the principle, that, however knowledge may be perverted and religious and moral influences resisted and the privileges and opportunities of virtuous advancement abused, these are yet the only means on which we may rely for the stability of the institutions, on which rest public prosperity and all

which makes social life a blessing. No man ever felt this principle more strongly than the fathers of New England; nor is there anything in the inheritance we have received from them, which is more to be prized, than the sentiment which prevails in this section of our country, respecting the duty of providing for the faithful instruction of the young. The noblest, the most deeply founded, and that which will be the most enduring monument of their wisdom, their foresight and their claims to perpetual veneration and gratitude, is the institution of the free schools, by which the means of an education adequate to the ordinary exigencies of life are extended to every family, however poor, in the city and the commonwealth. They were *men*, and had their weaknesses and errors. But whatever were their errors, in this, at least, all will acknowledge that they were *right*. And, whatever were their weaknesses, here they displayed a greatness of moral strength above almost all of their age. Who that knows his obligations to them, has not blessed God in a remembrance of these excellent men, when passing through our villages and towns he has seen everywhere, at short distances between, the school-houses, where the children of the affluent, of the middling classes, and of the poorest are either sitting together at their tasks on the same forms and under the same instructors; or, without distinction of outward condition, are mingling together their affections and interests in the same sports and gambols, around the place to which they go to be taught; and which will only be remembered by them to the last hour of life with a feebler feeling of delight, than the very home of their childhood?

Would that the inestimable worth of these nurseries of

knowledge and virtue were felt, as it should be, by every parent in our state!* When looking at the institutions in our city, on which does the mind rest its strongest confidence, that the blessings by which we are distinguished will be transmitted to our descendants? Where is our strongest bulwark against ignorance, infidelity, recklessness and crime? Where does the parent, solicitous for his young children, look beyond home and beyond his church for the influences, by which they are to be

* The tenants of Alms-houses and of Prisons are not of those only who have been reared in the city. There are uneducated and undisciplined children in our country towns, whose condition calls loudly for the sympathy of those, whose proper business and duty it is to have a moral care for them. In a recent ride, in which I passed through some of the most flourishing villages of our commonwealth, I witnessed the painful spectacle of ten or a dozen children, from ten to fourteen years of age, gathered in groups on the green before a tavern, for the same petty gambling which is seen among children of the same class in the by-places of the capital. And who can doubt whether these children are rearing for poverty and crime? I know not, indeed, which is most painful, the spectacle of children so employed; or, of the parents, and of the religious and civil guides in whose very neighborhood these children live, either passing them daily without even a consciousness of their employment and their danger, or looking upon them without one feeling of obligation to attempt their moral recovery. Even a single individual in either of these villages, at a comparatively very small expense of time and labor, might secure a competent education for almost every child in the village in which he lives; and without any force or unkindness, break up and prevent all associations for vicious purposes among the young. All, indeed, are not qualified for this, or for any office. But there are those in every village, who by assuming this agency may make themselves its best benefactors; and scarcely less the benefactors of their country. Few of my Reports, I believe, find their way into the country. But I shall have done no little good, if I can call the attention even of one true philanthropist there to this interesting subject.

trained for usefulness, respectability, and happiness? There is one answer to all these inquiries. Our eighty free schools, supported by a tax most willingly paid of \$65,000, with their doors open alike to the poorest as to the richest, are, even more than our hundred and fifty private schools, the treasure and delight of every Christian patriot among us, whether he have or have not children to send to them.* It should be known, however, and pondered, that there are many children, even in our city, who should be in these schools but who are not in them. These, as well as the older children to whom I have referred, are at an age, at which they may be reclaimed and saved. Where, then, rests responsibility concerning them? Let me speak plainly on this subject. It rests, in part upon the city government; and, in part upon all of us in the more prospered conditions of society, who could, if we would, do much for the salvation of these children. And is not their salvation a far higher, as well as a less costly object, than are most of the interests which engage public attention? Is not their advancing moral ruin one of the greatest of the calamities to be apprehended by us? If these children are finally to be the victims of their vices, the tenants of our prisons, or are in any way to drag out a degraded and miserable existence, awful, as it seems to me, is the account which must be rendered of this evil, by those who are in full possession of the means by which it might be prevented.

* In the report made in 1829, in compliance with an act of the Legislature requiring a triennial return of the several schools in the commonwealth, we are told that our 80 free schools then contained 7,430 pupils; and our 155 private schools, 4,018. In these 235 schools, there were therefore 11,488 pupils.

In bringing before you the classes of children described in this Report and the means of their moral recovery, it may have seemed that I have laid an undue stress upon the influence of general and public education, while I have but glanced at the most important means, as well of remedying, as of preventing evil; that is, the faithful maintenance of domestic discipline and of domestic instruction. No one, however, more readily than I, will accede to the doctrine, of the paramount claims and importance of domestic education. But I could not have despatched this topic in a few words, and therefore would not introduce it in a connexion, in which I could not have done justice to it. Yet I may say, let the measures be taken, which I have recommended for the salvation of the children of whom I have spoken, and not a little will thus be done to aid the cause of family government; to give a new impulse to parents in the moral charge of their children; and to children, an increased sense of the duty they owe to their parents, and of the connexion at once between virtue and happiness and between vice and misery. Much also may and will be done by a faithful ministry for the poor, in aid of this great means of individual and of social good. — But I must desist. Glad and grateful shall I be, if I may be an instrument even of the smallest advancement of any one of the means, whether preventive or remedial, of saving and blessing even one of those, who but for the intervention of christian sympathy would have been unheeded; and but for a christian watchfulness excited by that sympathy would have been *lost*.

I have preached but seldom during the last six months. The services of the chapel within this time have been performed by a few of my friends, to whom I wish that I could make any better return than an assurance of my hearty gratitude. Whether these services can be continued as they have been, I know not. I am compelled, however, to say, that I cannot preach. If any gentleman can be found, who is disposed to cooperate with me in my work and whom you shall approve, the charge of the chapel might devolve on him; and to do what I can to obtain the services of such an one, I beg leave to say, that whenever you may be pleased to make the appointment, I will relinquish to my colleague any part or the whole of the salary which I receive from you; and will fail in no endeavor to aid him in the most efficient discharge of his duties. — From the date of my last Report I had no check in my service, till the close of February; when I was suddenly taken off from it by an illness, which confined me for five weeks. I have however, as I think, passed a very useful winter. The weather during a part of the time was very severe; and large numbers of the poor were wholly unable to obtain the employment, by which to provide for their families. But I am not aware that there has been any extraordinary suffering among us. There was a large demand for private benevolence, and it was largely answered. The benefactors of my poor's purse, old and young, known and unknown, may be assured that I have the strongest sense of their kindness; and that a very great extent of want has been relieved by it.

Very respectfully,

JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

BOSTON, MAY 5TH, 1831.

NOTICE.

Mr Tuckerman began his ministry for the poor in Boston on the 5th of November, 1826. Four quarterly reports were printed in the first year of his ministry, and six semi-annual reports have since been published. The general topics of the preceding semi-annual reports have been, — ‘The importance of a permanent ministry for the poor of cities; and of the employment of a sufficient number in this ministry, to secure a moral charge of the families, which cannot be brought under the pastoral care of the ministers of the churches of any city.’ — ‘The qualifications to be required in ministers for the poor.’ — ‘The claims and benefits of this ministry; and, the wages given to the poor.’ — ‘The causes of the number of the poor in Boston, and the means which will be most effectual for relieving their wants.’ — ‘The classes and conditions of the poor; the kinds and degrees of poverty.’ — And, ‘The tendency of cities to an accumulation of poverty and vice; and the importance of an enlightened public sentiment on this subject, as the best means by which to remedy, and to prevent, the growth of these evils.’ The subject of poverty, in these reports, has been treated with a particular reference to Boston. But it is believed, that a more than usual interest is now felt in many parts of our country upon all the questions which relate to poverty and crime; and, under this conviction, it is thought that Mr Tuckerman’s reports may be acceptable beyond the limits of our city. The Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association have therefore determined, in future to publish these reports as parts of their first series of tracts. Though the objects of Mr Tuckerman’s ministry are of a local character, yet as this ministry is under the patronage of the Association, it is thought that it will not be improper to avail ourselves of this means of calling forth a more extended and active sympathy, in the cause of improving the character and condition of the less prospered classes of our fellow beings.